



City of Seattle
Department of Design,
Construction and Land Use

May 1, 2001

TO: Margaret Pageler, President, City Council

FROM: Rick Krochalis, Director

SUBJECT: Proposed 1997 Seattle Building Code Cleanup Ordinance

Attached for your consideration is a propose clean-up to the 1997 Seattle Building Code. The purpose of this ordinance is to correct editorial errors and to resolve issues not addressed with the adoption of the 1997 Seattle Building Code in June of 1998. This ordinance is the result of extensive review by Department staff, the Construction Codes Advisory Board, and comments and suggestions from architects, engineers, and designers who apply the Seattle Building Code every day.

PUBLIC REVIEW

The primary avenue of public review for the Building Code is the Construction Codes Advisory Board (CCAB). The Board is composed of 13 representatives from the development community and the general public. Staff of the Fire Marshal's office and the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health also participated in the review of this ordinance.

We published announcements about the availability of this proposed ordinance in the DCLU INFO and made copies available to the general public. We responded to several requests for copies of the proposed ordinance, but received no additional comments. DCLU worked with CCAB to reach agreement on all of the proposed revisions and updates to the 1997 Seattle Building Code.

MAJOR CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

A detailed section-by-section summary of changes appears below. We would like to bring your attention to the following changes:

Expiration of Permit Applications. Section 106.6.4 is amended to provide that applications for which no permit is issued within twelve months will expire. Under certain circumstances, the building official is given latitude to extend the time period up to twenty-four months or longer if circumstances beyond the control of the applicant are the cause of delay in issuing a permit.

Buildings with Mixed Types of Construction and Occupancies. Section 601.2.2 is amended to allow more flexibility in how buildings meeting the requirements of this section may be built. In addition, an amendment also requires that any building built according to this section will be required to install an automatic sprinkler system. The types of buildings affected by these amendments are typically three- to five-story wood-framed residential structures over a concrete and steel first-story and basement floors, e.g., many of the developments completed in the Belltown area over the past decade.

COST IMPACTS

The cost of adopting these codes is part of DCLU's normal operation and budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL (SEPA) REVIEW

Adoption of the Building Code is categorically exempt from environmental review per Section 25.05.800U of the Seattle Municipal Code.

CHANGES TO THE 1997 SEATTLE BUILDING CODE

Section 103 Violations and Penalties. Amendments to this section clarify that during a civil trial, the burden of proof is on the City to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the violation occurred, and to clarify that issuance of a notice of violation or an order of the Director is not evidence in and of itself that a violation exists or will exist. These changes were suggested by the Law Department.

Section 104.10 Responsibilities of Structural Engineer of Record. Added an exception allowing a licensed engineer other than the structural engineer of record to design the primary structure of single-story light gage steel buildings.

Section 106.2 Work Exempt from Permit. Amendments attempt to clarify when repair work requires a permit and the types of antennas that do not require a permit.

Section 106.6.4 Expiration of Permit Application. This section is amended to provide that applications for which no permit is issued within 12 months will expire. Under certain circumstances, the building official is given latitude to extend the time period up to 24 months. Extensions may be granted only once. The time period to complete an application may be extended longer than 24 months if issuance of the permit is delayed by litigation, preparation of an environmental impact statement, appeals, or other causes related to the application but beyond the applicant's control. After a permit application expires, the applicant must resubmit plans and pay a new fee. The building official is required to notify the applicant in writing at least 30 days before the application is due to expire.

Sections 202, 310.1, 310.15, 313.1. "Adult family home" is defined and added to Group R-3 to be consistent with changes to the State Building Code.

Section 206 Definitions. Added definition of "Emergency Power System", as defined by Electrical Code Article 700.

Section 302.4 Fire Ratings for Occupancy Separations in Buildings with Mixed Uses or Occupancies. An exception for storage or laundry rooms serving Group R, Division 1 Occupancies that are used in common by tenants and separated from the rest of the building by not less than one-hour fire-resistive occupancy separation was moved from Section 310.2.2.

Section 307.2.6 Standby Power Required for Certain Group H Occupancies. This section is deleted to make Building Code provisions relating to standby power consistent with the Electrical Code. The provisions of this section are more appropriately characterized as emergency power system requirements and thus are incorporated into section 307.2.7.

Section 307.2.7 Emergency Power Required for Certain Group H Occupancies. This section is amended to make the Building Code provisions relating to emergency power consistent with the Electrical Code. Power system requirements of section 307.2.6 more appropriately characterized as emergency power are added to this section.

Interpretation I307.2. This section is amended to make the Building Code provisions relating to standby and emergency power consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 310.2.2 Special Provisions for Construction, Height, and Allowable Area for Group R Occupancies. Occupancy separation requirements for storage or laundry rooms serving a Group R, Division 1 Occupancy were moved to a more appropriate section, Section 302.4. Another amendment clarifies that fire-resistive construction requirements apply to individual storage lockers located in storage rooms serving Group R, Division 1 Occupancies.

Sections 310.6 and 313.6. Minimum ceiling height is reduced to 7 feet in Group R and Group LC occupancies, consistent with changes to the State Building Code.

Section 311.2.2.1 Special Provisions for Construction, Height, and Allowable Area for Group S Occupancies. This section is moved to a more appropriate portion of the Building Code regulating mixed types of construction, Section 601.2.

Section 402.7 Emergency Power. This section was amended by changing the references to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 403.2.2 Modifications to Automatic Sprinkler Systems. Obsolete reference to section 709.3.2 stricken.

Section 403.5.3 Fire Department Communication System. Reference to “standby power” stricken to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 403.8 Emergency Power Systems. Amendments to this section make Building Code references to systems requiring emergency power consistent with the Electrical Code and adds a reference to Section 3016.7 for operation of elevators on emergency power.

Section 403.9 Means of Egress. Item 3 of this section, requiring re-entry points from an exit stairwell at approximately every fifth floor in a high-rise building, is made a code alternate to Item 2, which requires a telephone or other 2-way communication device be provided at every fifth floor.

Section 404.3 Emergency Power. This section was amended by changing the references to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 405.3.3.1 Smoke Control. This section was amended by changing the references to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 502 Premises Identification. The protocol for determining addresses in Seattle is updated to be consistent with current practice.

Table 5-A Exterior Wall and Opening Protection Based on Location on Property for All Construction Types. Footnote 17 to this table is amended to be consistent with Section 503.4.8, which allows exterior walls in U-1 Occupancies to be protected on one side.

Section 601.2.2 Mixed Types of Construction. This section was moved in its entirety from Section 311.2.2.1 because its primary focus is on requirements related to the types of construction rather than the occupancy types allowed. This section allows a wood-frame building that is constructed on top of a concrete and steel building to be considered as a separate building for purposes of height, number of story, and area limitations, provided that there is a three-hour occupancy separation between the two buildings and other criteria are met. The intent of the amendments to this section is to allow the three-hour occupancy separation to be located anywhere in the building and to recognize the greater level of safety afforded by a building with more Type I construction. Thus, amendments to this section allow the three-hour occupancy separation to be located on any floor, unlike the current section, which limits the three-hour occupancy separation to the floor of the second story on flat sites, or the floor of the third story on sloping sites with specific grade conditions. Overall, occupied areas may not be more than 75 feet above the lowest level of fire department access.

Section 711.1 General Requirements for Shaft Enclosures. This section is amended to delete the reference to Section 711.7, which no longer exists.

Section 715 Electrical Wiring, Pipes, Ducts and Equipment in Elevator Hoistways and Machine Rooms. The requirements of this section are deleted to correct inconsistencies with Section 3022, which regulates the same subject.

Section 902 Standards of Quality. Reference is changed to current edition of National Fire Protection Association Standard, consistent with change to the State Building Code.

Section 904.2.3.6 Automatic Sprinkler Systems in Temporary Amusement Buildings. This amendment clarifies that an automatic sprinkler system is required in all amusement buildings, including portable or temporary, but allows approved temporary automatic sprinkler systems to be installed in portable and temporary buildings and exempts smaller portable or temporary amusement buildings.

Section 904.2.9.2 Fire Extinguishing Requirements for Group R, Division 1 Occupancies. This section is amended to state that in addition to adequate fire department vehicle access, an area separation wall is required between townhouses, as opposed to two-hour fire-resistive construction, in order for the building official to consider waiving the requirement to install an automatic sprinkler system.

Section 905.2.1 General Requirements for Smoke Control Design Methods. This section was amended by changing the references to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code, to update references to the Seattle Electrical Code, and to state that the pressurization system shall comply with Section 905.14.

Section 905.8.1 General Requirements for Smoke Control Power Systems. This section was amended by changing the references to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 905.9.2 Wiring for Smoke Control Detection and Control Systems. This section is deleted because it is addressed by the Electrical Code.

Section 905.15.8 Acceptance Testing for Smoke Control Systems. This section was amended by changing the reference to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 1003.2.9.2 Power Supply for Means of Egress Illumination. An amendment to this section requires that egress illumination shall be provided within 10 seconds of normal power supply failure.

Section 1003.3.3.5 and 1003.3.4.4 Landings at Stairways and Ramps. Corrects errors and coordinates with the State Building Code.

Section 1004.2.3.2 Exit Access Requirements from Individual Floors. Exception added for small basements containing only storage, laundry, and/or maintenance offices, which was taken from Section 1004.2.3.3.

Code Alternate CA1004.2b. Amendments to this section clarify that the pressurization requirements of this section apply to not only the exit enclosure, but also any related exit passageway.

Section 1004.2.3.3 Exit Access Requirements from Individual Spaces. Exception for small basements containing only storage, laundry, and/or maintenance offices moved to more appropriate section, Section 1004.2.3.2, relating to exit access requirements from individual floors as opposed to individual spaces.

Section 1004.3 Exit Access Components. Amendments correct a grammatical error and update a reference to a Section of Chapter 30 relating to elevators.

Section 1005.3.3.2 Exit Component – Construction. This section was written in such a way that there were no fire-resistive construction requirements for exit enclosures in a four story building. The amendment corrects this inadvertent exception and requires not less than one-hour fire-resistive construction for exit enclosures in building of four stories or less, as opposed to the current language that applies only to buildings of less than four stories.

Table 10-A Minimum Egress Requirements. Amendment corrects occupant load factor for classrooms from 20 to 25 as has appeared in previous editions of the Seattle Building Code.

Section 1206.7 Radon Resistive Construction Techniques. Changes to State requirements for radon mitigation are incorporated.

Section 1506.3 Overflow Drains and Scuppers. Updates references to the Seattle Plumbing Code.

Interpretation I1506 Overflow Drains and Scuppers. Amendments to this section update references to the Seattle Plumbing Code.

Table 16-A Uniform and Concentrated Loads. Amendment to footnote 10 of this table corrects typographical error.

Tables 23-II-I-1 and 23-II-I-2. The Washington State Building Code Council repealed its amendments to these tables; thus this amendment makes the tables consistent with the Washington State Building Code.

Sections 3002, 3003, 3004, 3011, 3013, 3016, and 3027 Codes Adopted by Reference and Section 3013 Requirements for New Material Lifts. These amendments update references to codes adopted by reference pertaining to elevators, escalators, and material lifts.

Section 3016.7 Elevator Operation on Emergency Power. Amendments to this section clarify that its provisions apply only to those elevators required to be supplied with emergency power. Other amendments change references to “standby” power to “emergency” power systems to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code’s use of these terms.

Section 3016.8 Multiple Hoistways. This section was amended by changing the reference to “standby” power to “emergency” power to make the Building Code consistent with the Electrical Code.

Section 3202.4 Drainage from Marquees. This section was amended to add an exception that allows marquees to drain away from a building under certain conditions.

Section 3404 Moved Buildings. This section was amended to make the Seattle Building Code consistent with state law relating to moved residential buildings or structures. Residential structures moved into Seattle are not required to comply with the Building Code requirements for new construction if the original occupancy classification is not changed. Compliance with all of the requirements of Chapter 34 will be required if the moved residential building undergo substantial alteration. Work performed on new and existing foundations must comply with the requirements for new construction.